

Asheville City Council
Planning and Economic Development Committee

11:30 a.m., August 20, 2008
Economic Development Office Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Councilwoman Robin Cape, Chair; Vice-Mayor Jan Davis, Councilman Bill Russell

Staff: Gary Jackson, Judy Daniel, Sam Powers, Brenda Mills, Nikki Gunter, Jonathon Feldman

Guests: Tom Gallaher, Barry Durand

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on July 9, 2008 at 29 Haywood Street at 11:30 a.m. Chair Robin Cape called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the July 9, 2008, meeting were approved as written.

2. Status Reports

Minority Business Program

Brenda Mills, Minority Business Program Coordinator, gave the report. Ms. Mills shared with the Committee both the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 Minority Business Program Annual Reports. She highlighted that she has changed from meeting individually with business owners seeking certification to group sessions, as they are much more effective for the business owners. These are held on a monthly basis, unless there is enough interest for a bi-monthly meeting. She indicated that the state is using the VendorLink system to certify minority owned businesses, which has increased participation by about 60%. The state is responsible for doing the disparity studies.

Ms. Mills has also been very involved in the LX Contracting team for the City, which has reviewed and updated procedures for contracting and minority business outreach by the City. The Team is now in the process of educating staff.

Downtown Master Plan

Mr. Tom Gallaher, a sub-consultant to Goody Clancy, Inc., gave the update. He reported that the next 30 days will be a critical time for the downtown master plan, as next week the draft document prepared by the consultants will be made available for study and review. The DTMP Steering Committee will be making every effort to assure that people receive the document and have an opportunity

to make comments. September 18th is the date of the public meeting. Please see the Downtown Master Plan website for other helpful information (www.ashevillenc.gov/downtownmasterplan). The PED Committee complimented the Steering Committee group for their extensive efforts at community outreach.

City Owned Property RFP

Mr. Sam Powers, Economic Development Director, gave the report.

Haywood Street/Civic Center site: The City expects to receive a revised letter of intent from McKibbin Hotel Group by the end of September. Once that letter is received, which should include information on the brand hotel for the site which will refine the number of rooms, parking issues and the square footage, discussions will move forward with the Basilica to see if a partnership for some public space is possible. Vice-Mayor Davis commented that the price point of the hotel brand needs to support the Civic Center.

Park Maintenance site: City staff met with the MHO team this week, and expect to receive a draft development agreement from them by mid-September.

Eagle Market Street site: The redevelopment project is ultimately an agreement between the Eagle Market Street Development Corporation and the developer, Eagle Renaissance, LLC. The City is helping with the negotiations.

Mr. Jackson updated the Committee on the Asheville Area Center for the Performing Arts (AACPA) and the Holiday Inn Airport. City Council will be receiving a staff report on the AACPA August 26, and negotiations continue with the land lease holder on Holiday Inn Airport property.

3. New Business

Telecom Tower

Ms. Nikki Gunter, Real Estate Manager, gave the report. Ms. Gunter noted that the City has studied the best practices of other municipalities and the rates they charge for cell tower leases, and, as a result, our rates will be changing. The City will retain the ability to manage and locate the towers, which will be defined in the terms of the lease. These lease agreements will appear on the consent agendas of future City Council meetings.

4. Public Comment

Mr. Barry Durand, member of CTS/Asheville, raised the concern of groundwater contamination issues at the former CTS site. Although the site is in the ETJ, but not the corporate limits, Mr. Durand asked the Committee to help encourage the EPA to move forward on the necessary clean up. Mr. Jackson asked that Mr. Durand provide the City with a copy of what the County sent to the EPA, and attach it to a written request of what Mr. Durand would like to see in a letter from the City. Staff will then move forward, at Council's direction.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.